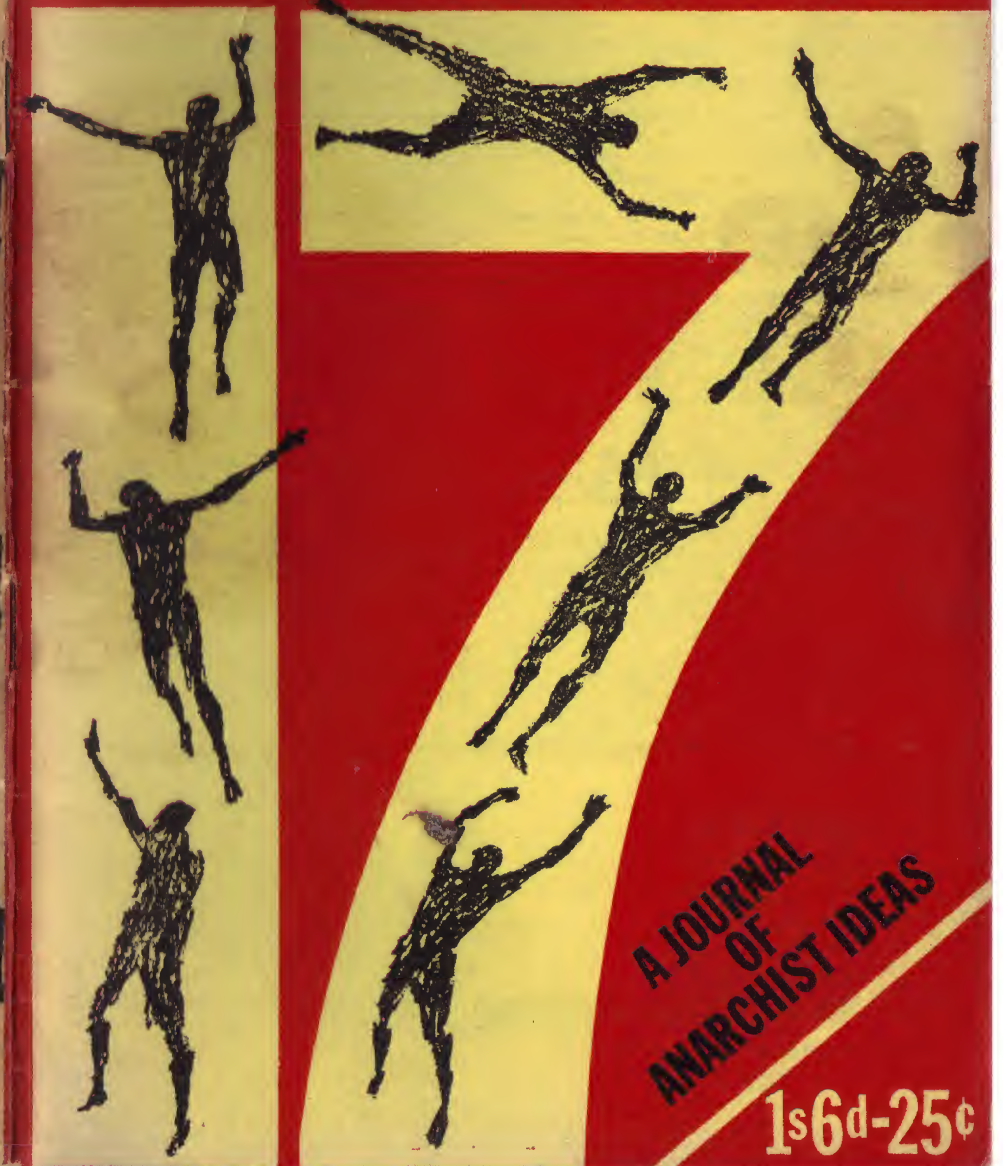




ANARCHY



A JOURNAL
OF
ANARCHIST IDEAS

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Towards a Lumpen-Proletariat	G.	193
Education vs. the Working Class	Martin Small	198
Freedom of Access	Donald Rooum	203
Benevolent Bureaucracy	Maurine Blancké	211
CD and CND: Are they Opposed?	G. H. Petch	216
Follow-Up: Anarchy & Cinema	Donald Nicholson-Smith	222
Cover and titles by	Rufus Segar	
Cover drawings by	Barney Wan	

Other issues of ANARCHY

1. Sex-and-Violence; Galbraith; the New Wave, Education, Opportunity, Equality.
2. Workers' Control.
3. What does anarchism mean today?; Africa; the Long Revolution; Exceptional Children.
4. De-institutionalisation; Conflicting strains in anarchism.
5. 1936: the Spanish Revolution.
6. Anarchy and the Cinema.
7. Adventure Playgrounds.
8. Anarchists and Fabians; Action Anthropology; Eroding Capitalism; Orwell.
9. Prison.
10. Sillitoe's Key to the Door; MacInnes on Crime; Augustus John's Utopia; Committee of 100 and Industry.
11. Paul Goodman; Neill on Education; the Character-Builders.
12. Who are the anarchists? A psychological and sociological enquiry.
13. Direct Action.
14. Disobedience.
15. The work of David Wills
16. Ethics of anarchism; Africa; Anthropology; Poetry of Dissent.

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TOWARDS A LUMPENPROLETARIAT

THE COUNTRY IS INHABITED BY "TWO NATIONS", now, as in the more distant past. The educational system, that is, the organization schools, is likely to be the factor which will lead to the division between the "two nations" becoming increasingly distinct.

In the nineteenth century the clear-cut division in society was due to the brutal fact of poverty. A large section of the populace really were poor, and it is difficult to grasp nowadays the extent and severity of the bitter material deprivation which was the lot of the mass of the people. We have by no means abolished poverty today, but it is the misfortune of certain minority groups today who must suffer as the calculable by-product of certain aspects of social planning. Such poverty has little in common with the *essential* poverty of the working class of the nineteenth century. According to Marx's thesis the capitalist-dominated society of his day would necessarily result in the increasing poverty of the proletariat and a sharper division of society between a small bourgeoisie and a large proletariat, the latter encompassing many marginal middle-class types and intellectuals.

We have seen that Marx's thesis was incorrect. Precisely the opposite development has taken place; the proletariat became subject to a process which has been labelled by the delightful term "embourgeoisification". The middle class has swollen, and the sociologists have had a high old time analyzing its substrata in terms reminiscent of geology. According to some sociologists, social mobility is the keynote of our present society. However, this period of social movement may well be a transitional stage leading to a stable (or stagnant, your choice of adjective will reveal your attitude) form of society in which there are very definite social castes which will become essentially separate, as foretold in Huxley's "Brave New World", or Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty Four".

In Marx's time, and indeed in the earlier part of this century, the degree of *inequality of opportunity* was very great. Many factors combined to frustrate the upwards social mobility of individuals of superior intelligence and ability who were burdened with working class origins. Such individuals, being largely denied the opportunity of personal advancement for themselves and their families therefore tended to devote their superior talents to the emancipation of the working class itself. Thus the impoverished and frustrated working class had a considerable leaven of highly intelligent, forceful and competent men and

women within it. Such a heaven raised the all round level of the social and political consciousness of working people in spite of the degrading influences of their general poverty. The early history of the radical and socialist movement of this country is a tribute to the vision and energy of numerous people of humble origins who had to struggle hard for education and enlightenment.

By contrast, the ruling class sheltered a far greater proportion of incompetent dim-wits than it does today. It was often sufficient to be "well connected" to occupy a position of considerable power and influence. In the Victorian age when a somewhat vulgarized version of Darwinian ideas about the survival of the fittest was being fostered to justify terrible poverty and inequality, it must have seemed likely that a ruling class which fostered so many nincompoops in office was unfitted to survive in the face of any determined revolutionary upsurge from the working class.

It has been remarked that the prophesies of Marx have utterly disconfirmed. But so have the pipe-dreams of William Morris, beautifully set out in his "News from Nowhere". Will the trends of the future lie more in the direction of social engineering by painless biological and psychological conditioning outlined in "Brave New World", or by the sort of terror outlined in "Nineteen Eighty-four"? It is the purpose of this article to suggest that both the ectogenesis and foetus-processing of the former book, and the terror of the Thought Police of the latter, are unnecessary. We already have the means of complete social differentiation, and it is working. We already have the means of producing hewers of wood and drawers of water who will *accept* their humble rôle in society, clerks who will aspire to nothing more than clerkhood, research physicists who will research into nothing else *but* physics, and in fact all the limbs and organs which make up the great body of Leviathan. Oh individual man with your individual spirit of enquiry, of longing, of discontent and unique aspiration, where will you be? Will such groups as produce and read this journal become a mere cancer in the body politic, and as a cancer, be cut out or cured?

The means which we have for effecting stable social stratification is of course the screening process of the schools interacting with the social effects of such screening. Note that here we have a process in which neither variable is pure cause or pure effect, but that cause and effect enter into each. To observe the process at an age no earlier than seven, we can look at the average Junior School. Here these seven-year olds are labelled A, B or C, which in the context of the average school stands for brighter, dimmer and dimmest. The criteria for the allocation to these three streams are (i) the report from the Infant school, (ii) the apparent level of education of the child's parents. Both these criteria of selection are in fact good rough and ready means for separating out the children on the basis of their probable future academic success. Sometimes we may go to a school where the headmaster declares that there is no streaming. He has 90 children aged 8 who are divided equally between Mr. X and Miss Y. and how is the allocation effected—by tossing a penny? Well no, by suitability. Then we find that Mr.

X is a reasonably competent teacher and has some chance of getting a few children up towards the 11+ pass level, so he gets the A stream, whereas Miss Y is herself a dim-wit so she gets the dullards, and helps to make them duller by her mis-handling of them. Some people point out that it is discouraging to a child to label him "C stream" at an early age, and so it is, but even the dimmest child learns the meaning of being allocated to Miss Y's class. In a certain English town there is a Junior school known to me where there is "no streaming"; Mr. Z's class is known on paper by his initials, but is known in speech as "the riffraff". Children often live up to the rôle which we assign to them.

I need hardly dwell much further on the continual screening processes which go on throughout the child's life at school. The 11+ exam is the most critical for the child in determining whether or not he is to become a hewer of wood and a drawer of water. But let us not lose sight of the fact that screening within the school system is *not* an entirely independent factor. Educational status largely determines future social status, but again, the social status of the parents largely determines the future educational status of the child. Thus in the *first* generation, parents of low social status will have a large percentage of their children attaining only poor educational standards and therefore, later on, achieving only low social status themselves. The small percentage of their children who are really bright will be creamed off, given opportunities for higher education and, later on, a place in the occupational and social structure that brings with it a way of life which effectively cuts them off from the family of their origin. The *second* generation of children of low social status will tend to marry among social peers and hence produce children who are, on the whole, even dimmer than their parents. The percentage of really bright children to be creamed off by the educational system will be *even smaller* in the second generation, and so the process of creaming off the brighter children from parents of low social status goes on. What is achieved is the same as the result of the selective breeding of plants or animals. Intelligence is being bred out of the working class. This process must result in their becoming stupider and stupider from generation to generation.

I do not suggest that this inevitable degenerative process of the working class is in any way a consciously intended policy. It is the by-product of a system which has been put forward by many well-intentioned reformers. Talent and the capacity for hard work in children is being rewarded by making opportunities for more advanced education open to them—their humble origins are no longer held against them if they are bright enough to compete with children of more privileged background. Where is the harm in that? If we are to criticise the inevitable result of it we must criticise the whole system of differential rewards and the competitive structure of our society.

As the process of the breeding out of intelligence from the working class has been mentioned, certain questions concerning genetic inheritance, and the nature of human intelligence must be considered more closely. The first is the question of the "biological regression to the

mean". If we consider any attribute of a population, say their physical height, we find that it is distributed approximately "normally", that is there are very few adults who are dwarfs or giants, rather few adults under 5 feet or over 6 feet and most of us somewhere about 5½ feet tall. The statistics are of course different for the two sexes, but actual measures of the heights of a large number of adults give nice bell-shaped distributions humped up at the mean and tailing off towards the two extremes. Now if a rather short man has a family by a rather short woman, the children, when mature, will tend to be rather short in stature also. But if the children are numerous enough for comparisons to be made, it will be seen that although a few may be even shorter than their parents, *the majority will be taller than their parents*. The same holds if two unusually tall people breed—a few of their offspring may be even taller than their parents, but the majority will be nearer the population mean. It is this factor of regression to the mean which maintains the approximately "normal" (*i.e.* bell-shaped) distribution of characteristics common to an identifiable population.

Now as far as intelligence is a genetically determined characteristic, the process of regression to the mean ensures that the majority of the offspring of very stupid couples will be generally *cleverer* than their parents, and the majority of the offspring of very intelligent couples will be generally *less clever* than their parents. So the thesis to which I have devoted the earlier part of this article will tend to be invalidated by the phenomenon of biological regression to the mean. But such a normalizing process presupposes (a) complete genetic determination, and (b) a high degree of random mating within the population. Neither of these conditions hold with respect to the characteristic we are considering—intelligence. Babies are not born with equal potentialities of intelligence any more than they have equal potentialities for growing to the same physical height. A great deal of the potentiality is determined at conception. The degree to which the existing potentiality of the individual is fulfilled is largely determined by his nurture. Thus the child of only moderate intellectual potentiality who is born into a family where there is a high level of intellectual stimulation will develop a higher all-round intelligence at quite an early age compared to another child of similar potentiality who is born into a family where the level of intellectual stimulation is low. At an early age, say 8 years old, there is already an enormous difference between the children of the professional class and the children of the working class. Some observers may be deceived by superficial silliness and prep-school affectations of manner in the former group, but on a wide variety of tests of ability the working class children are significantly inferior. In former times such a difference in capacity could be attributed to the generally lower standard of nourishment and health of working class children, but this is not the case today. The difference in intelligence which is manifest at the age of 8, widens as the children grow older.

I am aware that I am describing a phenomenon which is only just beginning to be manifest today. There are probably more children from working class homes going to the university and obtaining high-

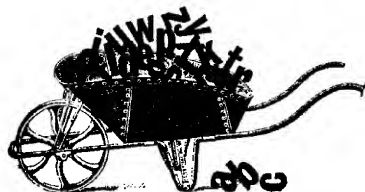
status jobs today, than ever before. But these successful people are *from* working class homes. Their children, although perhaps maintaining contact with working class grandparents, will not grow up in a truly working class environment. What I am calling attention to is a process which is just beginning and which in a few generations may have quite spectacular results in the creation of a genuine, mass *lumpenproletariat*. Perhaps they will be well-fed and housed, but they will have the minds of cattle. No social system has ever achieved such mass degradation of the intellect before. Where a peasantry has been oppressed for centuries, or a proletariat kept in ignoble poverty, no such degenerative process has occurred, for acquired characteristics are not transmitted genetically. In every frustrated proletariat the clever have lived alongside of the stupid and the vagueries of sexual desire achieved some of the beneficent effects of random mating. But now in our civilization we have a clear-cut plan which results in selective breeding. Even our most "progressive" measures aid the process, for girls are being given opportunities more equal to those of boys. The bright lad from a working class environment no longer tends to pick from among the more physically attractive of a bunch of girls who are all equally uneducated; he is more likely to pick from among the brighter girls who also have been creamed off to go to grammar school and university.

All that I have set forth above may lead some readers to conclude that I am trying to make out a case against the degree of opportunity for advancement which now exists for children of lower socio-economic origins. Indeed, my last paragraph might be misinterpreted to indicate that I oppose equality of educational opportunity for girls and boys. I am trying to make out no such case, nor to mock at and deride the working class in the manner of Evelyn Waugh. I am merely concerned to point out the logical consequences of a social policy, for humans populations are as susceptible to the results of selective breeding as are other animal populations. Above all, I do not claim that the inevitable results of such a policy are either desired or anticipated by those who have introduced the policy. I do not suggest that this policy should be reversed and that we should go back to what some people may regard as "the good old days" when the more intelligent sons of the working class were frustrated and had to educate themselves, and strove to rouse their duller brethren by soap-box oratory at the street corners.

The answer to the depressing prospect which I have outlined lies outside the realm of educational selection. The educational system subserves the concept of a society based upon differential rewards in the occupational structure. The rightness of this concept is unquestioned by all brands of political parties, right and left; the anarchists alone question the rightness of the fundamental principle of the wages system. We now have the technical capacity in human engineering to ensure a meritocracy, but the achievement of such a conditions also results in a stagnant and dull-witted proletariat. What should be our aim?

G.

MARTIN SMALL



EDUCATION vs THE WORKING CLASS

Education and the Working Class, by Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962, 28s.)

THIS BOOK IS SUBTITLED "Some general themes raised by a study of 88 working class children in a northern industrial city"—that is all such children who have reached a certain standard of grammar school education between the years 1946 and 1954 (girls) and between 1949 and 1952 (boys),¹—most of them went on to university: though "there was a diversion of gifted girls to the training colleges, and amongst those at university were some who were undercut by social doubts which, playing upon a sensitive or flawed personality, could have distressing results", most of them "completed their education happily and successfully. There had been moments of stress, but most grew through this and accepted both the way they had been trained, and the world for which they were being prepared. They are now middle-class citizens."

In raising general themes the authors are largely concerned with the implications of that last adjective "middle-class". Marburton is a prosperous city eighty miles north of Birmingham and the latest guide book considers that it is "almost in the centre of England", (Marburton is not its name, but get an atlas and you can work it out), and its four grammar schools, like most English grammar schools, have been founded, and [are] often staffed, by the local middle class for the children of that class." What is now the function of an originally middle class institution in a society now using it to tap sources of energy outside the middle class?

"The aim is to enrich understanding of the social processes of education, not to provide facts and figures about the immediately contemporary situation." (229) And on the first page the authors stress "The paramount fact that we were dealing with people and not things; and that any "objectivity" to which we could lay claim must always conceal areas of 'relationship' which, though they might threaten to divert or swamp the social observer, were also, in potential, the richest source of vital understanding. No social observer can simply observe. His essential humanity compels him to feel, to 'belong'." (3-4) They

make extensive use of the Crowther reports, but at one point they suggest that "'findings' or 'conclusions' of this precise arithmetical nature, can, in a sense, be irrelevant to the issues that are affecting young people's lives." (132) What findings and conclusions, then, are relevant? The authors say very little about the direction of the interviews from which they gained their information: the direction seems to have been minimal, but the information is detailed, it has been assembled with skill and care, and it is illuminating and fascinating. Even assuming that the educational experience of these children is "exceptional", yet the exceptional remains symptomatic and indicative of forces and stresses in the ordinary social structure: for we live in a totalitarian society, and each one of us lives, not his own life, but rather an assemblage of bits and pieces of the lives of ideal people constructed in response to the lessons of history and given authoritative personification in institutions. The state was the first mass medium, and man's laws have been synchronising man's existence and experience long before the appearance of television, etc.

For the purposes of comparison and contrast the authors first examine ten middle class children, who received their education at the same time as the 88 working class children and whose parents were confident of their children's right to a Grammar school education—they were not able to bequeath to their children any vast amount of capital, but they were able to hand on an increasing skill in commanding the state system such that their sons and daughters ultimately received a high standard of education, and one which helped them move smoothly into satisfied and energetic citizens." (42) The authors think it significant that of the 86 working class families whose 88 children (there were two sets of sisters) received the full grammar school education² 34 belonged to the 'sunken middle class'. It would seem, they suggest, "that one of the consequences of throwing open grammar school education has been that middle-class families who have collapsed through ill-health, bankruptcy, foolishness or any of the stray chances of life, have been able to educate their children out of their fallen condition and reclaim the social position of their parents and grandparents." (56) The poor relation is trying to re-establish himself—" . . . perhaps [they are quoting the words of a middle class child who has become a grammar school teacher] after ten years or so, I might start looking around . . . But you've got to establish yourself first, haven't you? Right?" (37)

But to the majority of these working class families the grammar school was alien: it was incomprehensible—it ignored them. At first for the parents there might be "their own rediscovery of the delights of learning and, in a sense, some began the grammar school course alongside their children. But after the first years came the worrying doubts and frank ignorance about what it might lead to, and when the reassurances and the knowledge did not flow back from the school, a dormant father might awake into a more sceptical life . . ." (122)

The trouble for the working class parents was that they knew so little . . . that they often lacked the raw material to ask questions with. Instead they asked if Alan was doing well at Latin, were told that he

was 2% up in a practice 'A' level paper—and went down the school steps with this new fact floating over the profound ignorance with which they came.”(206)

For the 88 working-class children entry into a grammar school meant, usually, a ceremony of initiation into the techniques of “an alternative community, a particular code of living together and growing up”(108): “They had suddenly lost in some measure that mesh of securities, expectations, recognitions, that we have called ‘neighbourhood’.”(94) For some this process (described, from different viewpoints but with equal eloquence, in Emile Durkheim’s *Moral Education* and in Hermann Hesse’s *Unterm Rad*—translated into English as *The Prodigy*) might be long and painful; others (the early leavers) might not survive it, or (the anti-school factions) might survive it only at great cost to themselves. In the beginning—and for ever afterwards—there was, if not the Word, at least The Message: “. . . daily from the teachers came a host of warnings, injunctions, suggestions, that spoke of the gulf existing [between grammar school, and other, children]. Working-class children felt themselves being separated from their kind. The choice between school and neighbourhood was faced daily in small concrete incidents. For the teachers these incidents were merely part of the pattern of manners, part of that training in ‘tone’ which distinguishes the grammar school from the general community. They were honourably conceived and held, but for the child something much more central to his living was being locally but continually strained . . .”(110)³ And daily there would be “incidents in which children—often quite shy children—had taken a painful stand against the school or over something which must have looked quite trivial to the teachers . . .”(109) And of the children who went to university, the small group of eight which went to Oxford and Cambridge “seems to be sensitively recording a crumbling away felt through much of the sample.”(149).

Up to a third of the sample are dissatisfied with their present position, but most of them have readily enough become middle-class citizens: what a fall is here, indeed, from what the authors found to be “perhaps the commonest feeling” among the working-class parents—the feeling “that education promised a kind of classless adulthood in which you could mix freely and talk with every kind of man and woman.”(83) “Measured intelligence is well known to be largely an acquired characteristic.” (Floud, Halsey and Martin, *Social Class and Educational Opportunity*, 65). But what a comedown to find that it means merely, what the middle class knows . . . Our great institution for the pursuit and discovery of truth is merely another life-attitudiniser, as much as any other in the last analysis a myth and a tradition which cannot be rationalised . . .

The achievement of orthodoxy “had meant a rejection at conscious or unconscious levels of the life of the ‘neighbourhood’”. This mattered less for some than for others. But when the new manners, new friends, new accents, new knowledge, heightened the adolescent tensions of home life, security and sense of purpose shifted from any wide emotional life and located itself narrowly in schoolwork, in certificates, in

markability.”(152) 46 of the children have become teachers—and the authors suggest that many who were ‘drifting’ “turned to teaching not because, deep at heart, they wanted to do it—but because they did not want to move away from the academic succession (eleven plus—O level

A level college teacher) which had become so entwined with their very sense of who they were in society.”(143)

From time to time, when interviewing an ex-working-class child, the authors sense that “one part of the mind acknowledged stratification, change and difference, but was overtopped by another part not wanting to know and recognise these things . . .”(173) “There is something infinitely pathetic in these former working-class children who lost their roots young, and who now with their rigid middle-class accent preserve ‘the stability of all our institutions, temporal and spiritual’ by avariciously reading the lives of Top People, or covet the public schools and glancing back at the society from which they came see no more than ‘the dim’, or the ‘specimens’ . . . [Grammar] schools born out of middle-class needs; schools based on social selection, further refined with each year after 11; schools offering a complex training in approved images of dominance and deference—are these the bases for general ‘individualism’, for ‘democratic living’?”(219-20). No, of course this will never do—but is “pathetic” the word to describe what is happening? As in Robert Jungk’s *Brighter Than A Thousand Suns*, the ordinary lives of simple people become terrifying, monstrous: screaming “Kafka! Kafka!”, we all rush for the nearest burrow . . . Freedom is not so much threatened as escaped; and one contemporary way of escaping it is to imagine that it may, or even must, be exchanged for security: security from certain things need not be an illusion, but it is an illusion to think that security may be purchased in exchange for freedom: freedom is not a state, it is a condition of life, of living. The authoritarian principle is that public order must be preserved against individual license, so that the individual may pursue his lawful desires in peace. But desires are not lawful, although if it were not for laws they would not exist: they would merely be ourselves—to be free is not to resent life, laws are resentment.

“We might be otherwise—we might be all
We dream of, happy, high, majestic.
Where is the love, beauty, and truth we seek
But in our mind? and if we were not weak
Should we be less in deed than in desire?”
Aye, if we were not weak—and we aspire
How vainly to be strong!” said Maddalo . . .

Our original sin is that we are not what we know we could be: concerning this matter *Education and the Working Class* provides a beautiful, intense and restrained collection of information: there would be no need to complain if the authors has not offered a way of accepting or changing this fact. But in *Some Notes on Education and the Working Class* at the end of the book they do appear to suggest that our

society needs those qualities in our working-class children which the grammar school system is at the moment swamping, and that therefore all that is necessary is to make the working class and education understand each other better.

Our society needs what it gets: it needs the middle class virtues: ambition, imagination, and realism. Ambition and imagination go very well together: "When he was small I used to try to impress on Derek [the son of the middle-class parent speaking] the need for work. I'd point to a man sweeping the road and say, 'That's what happens to people who've got no ambition and don't work hard when it's necessary'." (17) "It's a question of using your imagination . . . you have to think of the years to come, you have to think of the time when you'll be 30 or 40. I think what starts you off, you see people around you and you say to yourself, 'Well, I don't want to be like him.' You think you might be like them in a few years' time and that sets you wondering." (20-1) All this provides a basis for "a realistic sense of their social position" (41)—they know that there is a very good reason for their being where they are: "I should say by and large that the working class are those that lack abilities, those who can't get on, that's who they are." (184) The middle class is—and knows that it is—that group of people who have been selected to tell other people—the working class—to do what it is necessary to do: is it really necessary to point out the unreason of erecting an authority to decide what is necessary to be done? . . . So long as there is a hierarchy of authority to be manned: so long as the principle of education is selection and not growth (this point is made in Herbert Read's otherwise uninspiring pamphlet on *The Education of Free Men* and rather better in Bob Green's article on *The Ethics of Anarchism*, in *ANARCHY* 16 pp. 164-5): for just so long the middle class virtues will triumph. In the meantime it is as well to remember that living inadequately is a problem which will not be solved by constructing another system but by contracting out of the present one—as Paul Goodman says: "A free society cannot be the substitution of a 'new order' for the old order; it is the extension of spheres of free action until they make up most of social life . . ." (quoted in *ANARCHY* 11, p.19). The only way to be free is to be free: we must live differently.

1. Appendix Two (pp. 259-62) of the book gives the definition of "working class" used in the sample, and a full description of the procedure used to select the sample.
2. Appendix 1 (pp. 229-49) examines a number of "early leavers."
3. Do people who say ". . . honourably . . . but . . ." really know what they mean?—Or, if they do know, do they really imagine what they know?—Or, further, why do they lack "the generous impulse to act that which they imagine" (Shelley)? or "action is the life of all, and if thou dost not act thou dost nothing." (The digger, Gerrard Winstanley).



FREEDOM OF ACCESS

Donald Rooum



THE GREATEST OBSTACLE TO ANARCHISM is the Doctrine of Original Sin.

These days, of course, it is not known by that name, or indeed by any name. It has degenerated into a bit of the amorphous body of nonsense which any fool knows is true, the conviction that most if not all individuals are inherently anti-social. To say from a public platform that everyone should have free access to the means of enjoying life is to provoke snickers of derision; most ordinary people seem to think most ordinary people, given free access to anything worth having, would waste it or destroy it.

I propose to show that where ordinary people *do* have free access to anything, they are reasonably responsible towards it.

A word of disclaimer is necessary before we come to the examples. Peter Kropotkin wrote an enthusiastic account of the open-access system in public libraries and has since been accused, mistakenly I think, of believing the spread of knowledge meant the advent of anarchy. I am about to write enthusiastically of open access and other examples of free access in practice, but let it be clear that I do not think for one moment that any of them are examples of incipient anarchy or bring anarchy any nearer. They are important because they prove that ordinary people have enough good sense to cope with a free access situation.

Public Libraries: the Open-Access System

(In library jargon "free access" means absence of censorships which is not what we are discussing).

"Open-access" means the practice of letting people wander among the bookshelves, handling books at will as they decide which, if any, to read or borrow. It is used today in all British public libraries, and most public libraries in the United States, Canada, Sweden and Denmark. Unesco advocates its use in countries now acquiring libraries for the first time, and it is so obviously the simplest way of making books avail-

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able that we who are used to it tend to think of it as universal. But it is not used in most of Europe. And a mere fifty years ago its introduction in British libraries was hotly resisted, on the grounds that it was positively immoral to expose respectable citizens to such temptation.

"Closed" libraries, which were once universal and are still "ordinary" in most parts of the world, work on catalogues. The book stacks are accessible only to the staff, who communicate with the public across a counter which is often railed, like the counter of a bank or post-office. The user finds the book he wants in the catalogue, fills in a form giving details of the book and himself, and hands the form to an assistant. If the book is in (the most frequently requested books are, of course, most frequently out), the assistant hands it over and copies the form into one or more ledgers.

The change to open-access began in the United States. Pawtucket (R.I.) Free Library had open shelves as early as 1879, and the first really big library to introduce open-access was probably Cleveland (Ohio) in 1890.

In Britain there was an interesting intermediate stage when libraries remained closed but readers could tell which books were in from "indicators", glazed frames with some way of indicating "in" and "out" for each individual book. In the most popular Cotgreave indicator, for instance, each book was represented by a tiny ledger (3 inches by 1 inch) with the book number in different colours at each end; if the book were in the blue end would face the public, if out the red end would show.

At the Belfast Library Conference of 1894 James Duff Brown, the librarian of Clerkenwell (now Finsbury Central), London, read a paper on open access ("Liberty for readers to help themselves") and modestly announced to the assembled librarians that he had introduced the system at his own library earlier the same year. Somewhat to his surprise, the fur flew. Brown suddenly discovered that he was "a crank, with a very disturbing capacity for foisting his cranks on the public", "an anarchist . . . in his cave of library chaos at Clerkenwell", and a villain who chose to ignore the well-known fact "that to give the public opportunity for undetected theft is to demoralize it," standing almost alone against the righteous hysteria of his fellows.

Open-access was a controversial issue in America too, but the moral indignation was never so intense there. Perhaps this was because indicators had never found favour there; librarians with financial interests in indicators shrieked loudest among the anti-Brown mob in Britain, and as open-access spread at least one indicator firm went bankrupt. Moral opposition soon collapsed in the face of public honesty; by 1914 nearly 200 British libraries had adopted open-access and most of the rest were waiting for suitable premises or equipment. Cotgreave indicators were sold second-hand to brewers, who used them for recording the whereabouts of barrels.

Actual statistics of thefts from libraries are never quite reliable. It is too easy for a librarian whose civic or professional pride is shaken to report stolen books as "discarded" or "withdrawn". But a comparative study of *reported* stealing was made in 1908, when open-access was still arguable but many libraries had adopted it. In cities between 100,000 and 300,000 inhabitants (the lightest-fingered group of communities) open-access libraries had lost between 8 and 42 volumes in every 10,000; closed libraries in the same group had lost between point-2 and 53 volumes in every 10,000. Thus the highest proportional loss by stealing was from a closed library. Open-access libraries as a whole lost more than closed libraries; but then, open-access libraries had at least 50 per cent more users.

Library "thieves" have been classified into four groups: 1. Persons hoping to sell the books, who are deterred by indelible markings. 2. Kleptomaniacs, a small group who may be deterred (not very effectively) by cloakrooms for depositing bags. 3. Absent-minded nits who forget to report to the desk; practically unknown in Britain where one must pass through a wicket on the way out of a library, and effectively deterred in America (where libraries open directly into the street) by awkward narrow doors and projecting notices at head-bumping level. 4. "Nefarious borrowers" who wish to borrow more than the permitted number of books or break some similar rule; these, the largest category of "thieves", are deterred by making library rules more permissive.

There are still thefts. But other things being equal the users of open-access libraries seem to be honest, if anything, than the users of closed libraries.

The National Health Service

The National Health Service happened to be launched on the same day as an arrant swindle called the National Insurance Scheme, and it superseded a contributory scheme called National Health Insurance. Consequently there has always been a certain confusion about its finances, and many people still believe they pay for the National Health Service by way of their National Insurance levy. In fact, of course, it is paid for out of ordinary taxes, like the Army and the prisons; there is no such thing as a special NHS contribution.

When NHS was launched, everyone in the country became entitled to: hospital and specialist services; domiciliary services like midwives and district nurses; and general medical, dental, pharmaceutical and ophthalmic services, without direct payment. Charges were soon introduced in respect of dental, pharmaceutical and ophthalmic services, but the reasons for these charges were given as pressure on the Exchequer, and abuses by practitioners paid on piecework and through trading profits; it was not suggested that patients were wasting the Service. The services of general practitioners are still free to all comers, and the only qualification for hospital, specialist or domiciliary nursing treatment is medical opinion that the patient needs it.

Before NHS was introduced there were all kinds of prophecies of disaster, and during the first year of its operation consumption of glasses, false teeth and drugs did indeed rocket. According to Aneurin Bevan, the pessimists then said "We told you so. The people cannot be trusted to use the service prudently or intelligently. It is bad now but there is worse to come. Abuse will pile on abuse until the whole scheme collapses."

But most of the early demand was the result of past neglect. When the backlog of sickness due to poverty was cleared the cost of the Service settled down to a reasonable eight pounds per head per annum. Most of this sum had been paid on private account before NHS existed, and a further large sum had been spent with the "innumerable harpies who battered on the sick".

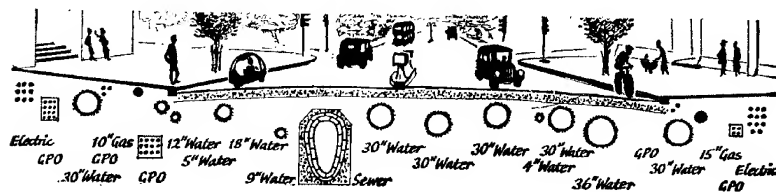
People certainly use medical services more freely now that doctor's bills do not frighten them. But they still spend large sums privately on medicines and dressings for the self-treatment of minor ailments, and they still hobble out to sit in miserable surgery waiting-rooms, even though the only penalty for asking the doctor to call for a minor illness, would be the knowledge that one was delaying attention for someone in greater need.

Domestic Water in London

Ratepayers in London pay, in addition to their ordinary municipal rates, an annual sum to the Metropolitan Water Board. Anyone who can reach a tap, drinking fountain or horse trough in the area served by the MWB can then help himself to as much water as he likes.

This is by no means the only way of paying for water distribution. In Australia, much of America and many other places, water for domestic use is piped through meters and charged for according to the amount consumed, like London's gas and electricity. In Algiers it is sold through meters to house-owners, who retail it through smaller meters to their tenants (usually making a minimum charge of 11 gallons per day per inhabited room). Meter charging was used in parts of England (not in the London area) during this century.

The fact that Londoners have never paid quantitatively for piped water is largely the result of historical accident. In 1237 when the burghers of London decided the streams and wells within the city walls were no longer sufficient, the City was very powerful and various out-



siders were anxious to secure its good will; King Henry III got one of his followers to grant the City access to springs on his estate, and a group of foreign merchants donated the cost of laying the conduit. As the City continued to grow it added to its supplies by the same sort of quiet blackmail; three centuries elapsed before water cost anything to the Corporation, and by then a tradition was established that piped water was as freely accessible as river water. Then the first private water companies had catchment areas too small to guarantee a continuous supply in all weathers and secured themselves financially by charging so much per year rather than so much per gallon.

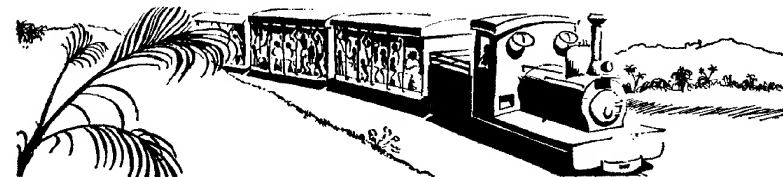
In 1884 the City Corporation introduced a Parliamentary bill for compelling the companies to supply water by meter on demand, but by then the tradition of free access to water had grown too strong and the bill was defeated. The main arguments against it were "that it would encourage the stinting of water . . . and that it would overthrow the system whereby the wealthier section of the community helped to relieve the poorer."

Industrial undertakings which use large quantities of water are charged quantitatively by the MWB, which also operates about 2,000 meters in the domestic mains and employs a staff of waste inspectors to control leakage and cut down cost. The individual domestic consumer who wastes small amounts of water cannot be detected, and could not be penalized in any way, even if he wasted quite a lot.

But the overwhelming majority of consumers co-operate voluntarily in the prevention of waste, by turning off taps which are not in use, and keeping taps in good repair at their own expense.

The Free Railway of Fiji

The Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited owns some 440 miles of permanent light railway in Fiji, which it uses for bringing cane to the sugar mills. In accordance with the original agreement under which the railways was constructed, the Company also operates a passenger service through the island of Viti Levu, from Sigatoka to Tavua, a distance of 129 miles. The one passenger train chugs twice weekly in both directions, stopping often, with an all-night stop at Lautoka; and it is usually overcrowded, with people sitting, standing and hanging on. British Railways, with all its faults, seldom of ever provides a service as bad as this.



But the Fijian railway has one unique advantage: it makes no charge to passengers.

I have no direct knowledge of the Fijian public's sense of responsibility towards the railway. However, the Sugar Company has done many favours for the local government since its railway was constructed, and if it found the free train embarrassing it could easily have obtained an agreement to make a charge, or discontinue the service.

The Soviet Twenty-year Plan

This is not an example of free access in practice now, but it is sometimes offered as an example of free access in the near future, so I might as well mention it.

"This generation will live under Communism" is the slogan dreamed-up by Soviet publicity men to present the plan for economic development until 1980. If Communism means "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need", the slogan is a bit exaggerated. Most of the vast increase in collective wealth envisaged by the programme will be distributed to specific classes of people. Thus: abolition of direct taxes for those wealthy enough to pay them; free communal meals for workers in factories, institutions and collective farms; free maintenance for children at school and people unable to work; shorter hours for industrial workers, especially miners. I am sure none of these proposals is objectionable, but they are nothing to do with distribution *according to need*.

On the other hand there are promises of: free medical services (extending the existing service to include medicines and sanatoria), free water, gas, and heating. If "free" in these cases means free to all comers, the fulfilment of these small promises would do more to advance Communism (as distinct from Russian Imperialism) than a whole moonful of soldiers.

Some objections to free access

The most frequent argument advanced against the idea of free access is that people are not responsible enough for it: "to give the public opportunity for undetected theft is to demoralize it", "people cannot be trusted to use the service intelligently" and so on. Freedom, we are told, is for saints, not real people. This is the argument I set out to refute with my examples, and I hope I have shown that where ordinary people are given responsibility they tend to act responsibly, without becoming in the least saintly.

There is another moralistic argument that, apart from abuses, having something for nothing is wrong-in-itself. A few years ago there was a campaign to prevent "foreigners" from enjoying the benefits of NHS, on the grounds that they had "not contributed". (This was of course a misunderstanding; anyone contributes to NHS who buys a half-pint of beer or pays taxes any other way). Experts and politicians patiently explained that the bureaucratic machinery for excusing foreigners would cost more than any treatment they might obtain; but

the campaigners were hurt at the suggestion of stinginess on their part, and made it quite clear that rather than spend a shilling on treating a sick foreigner, they would spend ten shillings making sure he *didn't* get treatment.

The science of behaviour is young, and I doubt if anyone understands the mentality of such people. My opinion, for what it is worth, is that a pious, patriotic upbringing has robbed them, both of the heart to be generous and of the guts to be selfish.

I suppose the first reaction of many anarchists to my examples would be to point out how limited they are, adding that the Ministry of Health and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company have motives other than pure generosity. I would reply that any degree of opportunity for people to regulate their own lives, no matter how it is obtained, is to be welcomed; and I trust most anarchists would agree.

There is, however, an argument, advanced not by anarchists so much as by certain Marxist thinkers, that a modicum of free access now is a bad thing, because it tends to make people content with their lot, and so delay the glorious revolution and the millenium when everyone will have free access to everything. For reasons which will appear, I think this argument is false; but even if I thought it valid I should suspect the *bona fides* of anyone prepared to sacrifice the small happiness of this generation, for the presumed greater happiness of the yet-unborn.

An alternative to buying and selling

Compared with free access, buying and selling is a crassly inefficient way of distributing wealth. Thousands of people spend their lives reading gas and electricity meters; if gas and electricity were free all that labour would be saved. Millions of man-hours are spent weighing tea into precise quarter-pound packets; if tea were free all that time would be spare. Weeks are spent deciding who is entitled to relief from bodies like the National Assistance Board; if the basic necessities of life were free . . . (I will not go on; there is enough profitless activity in the world already). Except in the context of a money economy, banking, stockbroking and much of accounting are a waste of time, commercial advertising and its ancillaries are a waste of time, all the jobs connected with travel tickets are a waste of time.

The counterpart of the free access principle is that people should decide for themselves when, where, and at what tasks they should work. Without the "incentive" of wages, people would probably not choose to work as long or as drudgingly as they do now; nor would they need to. A fraction of the total time now spent in which the Direction of Labour Order calls "gainful employment", devoted to the actual production of usable wealth, could satisfy everyone's basic needs.

I say "basic" needs, because I agree with anyone who says it is impossible for *all* the requirements of whole human beings to be satisfied. As long as there is ambition, the healthy urge to self-improvement and self-enlargement, there must be some excess of demand over supply.

I have already gone further than I intended in the direction of "drawing a blueprint for the free society", so I offer it not as a prediction or a doctrine, but merely as a logical possibility, that the distribution of scarce goods *could* be controlled by the producers, much as the distribution of home-made marmalade is controlled now. If there were a shortage of, say, telescopes, the actual makers, or those who imported them from a well-stocked area, could dole them out to themselves, their friends, and anyone who could put them under an obligation or impress them with his need for a telescope. This would not be a perfect way of placing available telescopes where they were most needed, but it would work at least as well as the buying and selling system.

But of course it is unfair to write as if the buying and selling system were *intended* to distribute wealth according to need it is much nearer the complicated truth to say money is for maintaining the powerful in power, and keeping the poor from getting too rich.

Towards a free access economy

The free access method seems to advance quickly once it gets started in a particular field. James Duff Brown was a courageous eccentric in 1894, but his colleagues imitated his open-access system when they saw it in operation. A later writer observed that in this matter the libraries did but follow the parks, which allowed free access to grass and flowers despite occasional abuses. The old Fijians who insisted on a free passenger service as a condition of a railway licence, may well have been influenced by the tradition of free access to locally-maintained tracks. And the successful agitation against the penny charge in Ladies' toilets is inspired by the knowledge that access is free to Gentlemen's urinals.

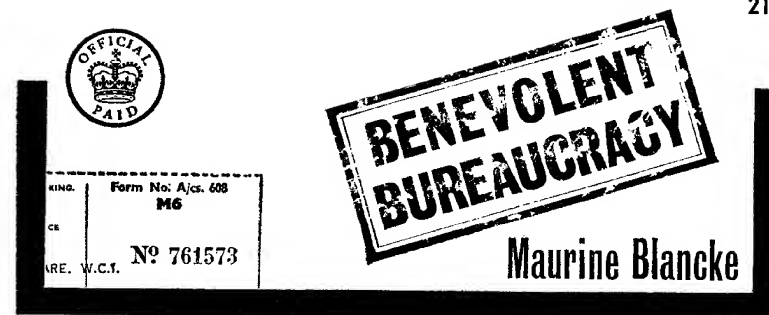
People do not easily change their habits. If they are used to obeying they may find it difficult to make decisions; but if they grow used to exercising a little responsibility they find they can cope with a little more. The more self-directed we are, the nearer we are to individual sovereignty.

I hate to strike a spark of optimism into the justified gloom of the H-bomb era, but I think perhaps people are learning to regard the right to decide how much they will take, of a growing number of services and commodities, as an ordinary, unrevolutionary, civil right.

References

I have written on a dull-sounding subject and I don't propose to frighten potential readers with a dull-looking list of sources. Let anyone who wants to follow up my facts write to me.

I acknowledge the assistance of the library staff of the Colonial Office for references to Fiji, and the enthusiastic help of the Librarian and Research office of the Library Association, who (in response to a request from a non-member writing for a journal he had never heard of) found me references to open-access in about two dozen different books.



BUREAUCRACY, THAT IS THE SYSTEM WHEREBY the functions and relationships of the members of the system are defined and regulated by impersonal rules, is supposed to be the most efficient manner to run an organization. Some social scientists consider it the most just system in terms of employment and relation with the public because all people are judged by the same criteria supposedly without reference to race, class origins, or political views.

A well-meaning bureaucracy, that is one which supposedly exists to perform some useful economic function or regulate abstractly beneficial goals, conforms fairly well to the second standard, that of equal treatment of people connected with it, and while it is easy to damn as unjust and humanly destructive a bureaucracy, such as the Prussian military system, the FBI, or the apparatus of the Communist Party, where selection for employment is prejudiced by class origins, political views, or inheritance, and the institutional function of the bureaucracy is to maintain an unequal class structure, suppress internal dissent, or support imperialist aggression and empire building, it is much more difficult to criticise a bureaucracy, such as that of a college, or "enlightened corporation", or welfare agency, which has a "well-meaning" function.

Both "well-meaning" and "ill-effecting" bureaucracies conform to the first standard of high efficiency when it is evaluated in terms of their own aims and emphasis. If efficiency is defined in a mechanical sense—for instance, how fast criminals are caught, how many battles are won, how quickly the tests are graded—a bureaucratic system, especially when it defines "efficiency" in its own terms, is efficient. However when a larger perspective is employed other than the mechanical one employed by many observers of and participants in the bureaucracy, often the same system which appeared administratively and mechanically efficient, appears humanly and socially inefficient.

"Ill-meaning" bureaucracies have been condemned for years as

MAURINE BLANCK, born 1941, is majoring in sociology at San Francisco State College, and has been negatively interested in bureaucracies ever since she lost her first form to fill out in the first grade.

destructive to some aspects of society. However, "well-meaning", bureaucracies nearly always escape criticism because their apparent function is so worthwhile, and the manner in which individuals and groups are abused by them are often subtle and the nature of their results ambiguous.

To take a case in point, there are the public and private colleges in the United States. Colleges, as for example San Francisco State college with which this writer is acquainted, possess excessively large and structured bureaucracies and use impersonal bureaucratic methods all out of proportion to their needs. They are rationalized by the excuse that they facilitate the administrative function of the college; the recording of grades, the granting of diplomas, the recording of courses, and the keeping track of students, etc. easier. Things are done faster, and therefore more students can be admitted and pass through the college machinery, and thereby the manna of education spread wider through society.

While on the one hand, college presidents at official ceremonies, utter great round words about "gaining in wisdom" and "partaking in the broad humanistic culture of our civilization", and so forth and so on, the primary function of most colleges is to create bureaucrats, and so their own bureaucracy rationalizes and pigeon-holes the student into an easily definable commodity, whose mind and evident accumulation of skills and knowledge can be placed at some point on an administrative ladder. More important, as the bureaucracy and its demands intercede between teacher and student, the intimacy of learning and teaching is destroyed; the dialogue between the waking mind and the educated mind is destroyed, is, one could say, muffled out by reams of forms and papers. The student himself is reduced to a passive participant in the process; he is herded through lines by fellow students with loudspeakers; he fills out forms with single word answers; his rationale is constantly offended and his time wasted by the unrelenting carrying out of the bureaucratic process; he is reduced to a few holes and squiggles on a IBM sheet.

Originally, I suppose—though I am perhaps flattering the authoritarian motives of the initiators—students were given counsellors to keep them from making stupid errors in judgment, like taking advanced calculus when they couldn't do arithmetic, or taking "Literature in Italian" when they couldn't decipher lesson 5 in the first year course. Nowadays however, counsellors and advisors are not counsellors and advisers; they are names. Names which must be scribbled on the appropriate place before a student can register, add a course, drop a course, change a section. Though the counsellors are mainly indifferent or vaguely sympathetic to the students, and rarely perform anything other than informing the student of requirements already available in the school catalogue, and scribbling his name in the appropriate blank, each student is required to have one, required to have his programme passed on by one. Counselling is a mechanical procedure each student must go to, rarely useful and often wasteful in terms of time; another whack in the bureaucratic gauntlet.

As, in any good bureaucracy, responsibility is diffuse and unfindable, the objects of the bureaucracy have little recourse if mistakes are made and injustices done. Most of these, such as the following illustrations, are minor events in a person's life, but each one adds to a self-concept which is passive, to the damage to the ego of impersonality, affronts to it, and the subjection to bland but insistent authorities of an irrational and uncommunicable nature.

If, say, a student's records are lost, the victim cannot pinpoint who did it, at what point they were lost, why they were lost. A counsellor neglects to sign or initial some tiny part of a form and the student must spend half the day looking him up again. An error occurred at the college of the writer's attendance, and the hapless student had to take a whole semester of administratively lost courses over again. A student at Stanford couldn't graduate because a "D" was recorded instead of an earned "C". Another case occurred where one branch of the administration lost the course and grade records of a student for all four years and naturally the student did not receive his degree. Though eventually, after frantic prodding, on the part of the student, a search was made and the records recovered, and the student received his diploma—a year later. Another student had the class card of one required class lost and never found, which merely meant that he had to postpone his graduation for a whole year until the course was reoffered again the next spring. A similar occurrence happened to a future teacher who had to hold off her entrance into the profession because of *one* lost unit. Many new students cannot take classes in their entering semester, because their old college forgets to send their files to the new college, though notified weeks and even months in advance.

The previous sorts of events, though hardly helpful to a person's self-respect and hardly in the spirit of education for wisdom, might be excused on the grounds that, for the benefit of thousands, occasionally a few must be (accidentally) sacrificed.

Another kind of event, where often conscious injustice is rationalized on the basis of an implication of bureaucratic rule; and where the coercion to conform is disguised behind "necessity", occurs in the teacher training programme.

Three students, personally known to this writer, one blind, one partially sighted, and the other crippled are being ejected from the teaching programme, and thereby from the teaching profession, not openly, but by means of the sly device of preventing them from taking practice teaching. Practice teaching is a course required by anyone who would become a teacher in order to get the credential which is necessary in order to teach in California schools. Whether a student can take the course is up to the education department itself, which simply means that a future teacher's fate lies in the hands of several old ladies and gentlemen, whose objectivity is often tinged with a certain bureaucratic sadism, put into the position of censors by the education department. The blind girl was told, though she commuted by bus from the city by herself, that she wouldn't be able to get around an

average high school. She'd gotten "A's" and "B's" in all her courses (thereby showing competence on the system's own terms), but wasn't even allowed to try the practice teaching course in order to prove her ability, but was censored out in advance. The partially blind girl, who in addition to being quietly insulted by the education department and receiving saccharine pity and "consideration" from instructors, is told she couldn't get around in a school (she can see large objects and get around the city by herself), and is too "unstable" to teach, though music teaching is what she most wants to do in life and is the only thing, at least now, which can save her from a meaningless, unproductive, and charity-ridden existence. The crippled girl, who manages to get around—albeit with difficulty—on crutches, is being denied the practice teaching course on the basis that she can't get around in a school, and because "we can't take the responsibility for an accident." I imagine they would prefer to see her out with a tin cup, than risk an accident.

Other students, though this is even more difficult to pinpoint than the previous examples, are cut out of the teaching programme on the basis of instability, bad character, or inability to be accepted by the children. For most, the reasons are rarely given; it may be anything from divergence in dress, "unsociableness", (a girl in San Diego was told to join a sorority—to broaden her social life—by the educationists), erratic grades, not enough of a disciplinarian, political activity of the wrong shade, eccentricity. But common to all of these, is that the refusal as told to the student is vague and general; the student has no access to records or the processes of making the decision; the school and the education department are both immune from any accusations of injustice from the student, because they have a briefcase full of precedents and general demands, nor can it be proved that one or another instructor or councillor was the precipitating factor, though the student is free to surmise helplessly all he wants to. *Within the system* the student can do nothing, for all these rules and statements come down from some board which is centred somewhere else or from ambiguously extendable regulations made long ago in Sacramento (California's Capital).

The student is made to feel foolish about simple mistakes, guilty about leaving something blank, to feel a vague fear of a vague entity called the "administration" or "the department", to feel non-conformity may be softly revenged by a vague entity to which demands and retribution go unfelt because it is so big, and most horrible of all, made to feel insignificant, as though he were just one atom identical to others being processed. If he fails, it is on the basis of a few abstract words on papers and tests; for many teachers know the members of their class little or not at all; the human relationship between teacher and learner destroyed dissolved in a maze of administrative demands and details.

It would be tedious to relate the little incidences, a cold and irate secretary brushing off a freshman near tears with confusion, a councillor not in when a student—who must have it signed immediately—needs a programme change signed, the arbitrary, unreasonable phrase, "go

and get so and so to sign it for you," and the irritating phrase "fill it out again, you made such and such an error," said by a tinny authoritative smile by a frustrated clerk who drives her mechanical power to the limit, enjoying it for want of anything better to enjoy. But in the centre of it all, like a theme song or a slogan, is the phrase, "We cannot take responsibility for this," and the variations, "I am not responsible," and "I cannot afford to be responsible if such and such happens."

Thus it happens here, and analogously in any bureaucracy where the dedication to one over-riding goal, "administrative efficiency", the "ability to process the greatest number of things or people," or even "absolute impartiality," results in the brushing aside and neglect of all other human values.

The human being is denied his organic unity and is valued only in terms of this or that attribute or category. In work, as the bureaucracies grow according to Parkinson's law (the bureaucracy grows in geometrically increasing ratio to the economic efficiency of the institution), more and more people are turned into bureaucrats. Immediacy, exuberance, companionship, generosity, the association of human beings, is sacrificed to the needs of the system. The fragile intimacy of the creative intellect with his work and his fellow humans is destroyed; the result is barren, mechanically exploitive, social machinery parallel to the physical machinery of the mechanized industry.

It is not only those institutions with bad ends, who use direct coercive violence authorized or not by law and force to subdue the vitality and free spirits of mankind, but the dull "well-meaning" institutions, use the excuse of "necessity" and "efficiency" to coldly manipulate their objects (those helped), and who circumscribe the work-life of their employees to such a point that the only pleasure left in the work is petty domination. Thus are the little managers created, who enjoy the little manipulations of power as much as any police system or military system does, and as the rules and regulations pile up, the ends of the institution are slowly destroyed, and it becomes another self-perpetuating ground for martinets, mutual authoritarianism, frustrated clerks, and exploitation on a psychological, social and finally economic level.

They depress the spirit of mankind; make of him an irresponsible automaton for whom the capacity to rebel is dissipated and lost, because the source of injustice is so diffuse and abstract it finally becomes a mere anxiety rather than an impetus to revolt against it. They kill the capacity for spontaneity and mutual aid (social responsibility without whips, points or meters) and destroy the ability to enjoy freedom or even know what it is. It is a necessity and an obligation for us—as believers in the possibility of men directing their own existences and in the possibility of mankind to take freedom and make of it a call to creativity, responsibility, and fulfillment—to study and examine these benevolent bureaucracies of private and state origins; to expose their method and their destructive aspects, while, as responsible critics, sifting the beneficial from the inhuman in their structure, just as we would study the way a physical machine affects the worker as well as

the production rate in order to merit its maintenance or its disuse, and offer superior structural forms in social and economic relations.

We need methods and results, in terms of human relationships, and society commensurate with our ideals of respects for the human individual and his neighbours, at least as much as we need the human efficiency and increased "production", so that the ends for which the latter are achieved (man) is not mutilated and deformed by the means.



PERSONALLY I HAVE NOT ADVOCATED CND publicly making much of opposition to CD, (a) because superficially and at first sight (beyond which most people do not penetrate) both CD and CND might well appear to be activated by similar motives of humanitarian concern, and (b) because - a slighter reason - some people emerge from their CD lectures to say "I have never been more opposed to nuclear weapons than now after learning about their effects," and (c) because opposition to CD volunteers may well consequently alienate potential allies of CND.

But underneath surface appearances, analysis can reveal propaganda and mind-conditioning of considerable subtlety. (It is the effect in conditioning minds that matters, far more than the degree to which it is intentional). Briefly, the case against CD rests on the suspicion that it serves to condition people to be more acceptant of nuclear weapons, of their production, and even their possible use. Before you jump in with a cry of "absurd" you should read some of the statements and writings of the strategist advocates of nuclear armaments - statements in which they advocate CD for its psychological effect in softening ordinary people's resistance to nuclear weapons and more especially to "nuclear brinkmanship" by the politicians. CD in the eyes of these experts is supposed (a) in particular, to make people feel that *something* at least can be done to cope with "nuclear attacks" and so to make people feel in time that these may be bearable . . . or more bearable

Anarchists, like most other supporters of the campaign against the bomb are probably united in the belief that Civil Defence is Civil Deception, but a frequent point made members of the public to propagandists of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and of the Committee of 100 is that they should do something "practical" against the bomb by supporting CD. G. H. Petch examines this argument and others.

than they used to think; and (b) in general, CD is supposed to accustom people to the general idea of nuclear weapons as part of life, of the natural order of things. (Also, incidentally, one local borough Civil Defence Officer wrote to the local press, in his official capacity, attacking CND and arguing in favour of the government's nuclear weapon policy on political grounds. He was challenged by me, and subsequently ordered officially not to touch the politics of the matter. Perhaps he had blown the gaffe on CD as an agency, government-subsidized, to induce people to rely on nuclear weapons. At the very least, of course, if you invest in nuclear weapons, you must invest in some precautionary apparatus against their use). Both these psychological effects are intended by the "nuclear strategists" to reduce public resistance to politicians who wish to go farther, and nearer, toward the "brink" in threat and counter-threat.

The normal, traditional, human, "man-and-woman-in-the-street" reaction to this is revulsion: as to the dangerous driver speeding wildly through populous streets. The "nuclear egg-heads" (intellectuals who know so much better than the ordinary man and woman, and his or her natural responsibilities, as virtually, in practice, to despise them), the leaders, the boffins, the technicians and technologists, who in our modern managerial and expert-dominated society, condemn these normal instinctive and traditional responses of ordinary men and women as "nerves" or "hysteria".

In fact it is the public men who have become dissociated from reality, and from the remaining values of traditional civilisation, which stem from the values of private life, and are contradicted by the compromises and betrayals inevitable in present public life. The nuclear eggheads seek to condition the minds of private people to acceptance of nuclear weapons, production, possible use . . . and astronomical costs at our expense.

Now for a more detailed analysis of the attitude of mind subtly propagated by means of CD. Nuclear weapons, all would admit, are in themselves evil. The only case for them is that they are a "necessary" evil. To accept their necessity is different from accepting *them*. But CD appears to be a way of coping with nuclear weapons. To spend time and energy and to become interested, tends to involve, whether one likes it or not, or even whether one is aware of it or not, a basic and probably sub-conscious acceptance of nuclear weapons. ("I am doing something about them, even 'all I can': so after I have done all I can, I cannot help feeling, at least a little, that I can sit back now, and accept the worst." CD can, in practical life, be an alternative to active opposition to nuclear weapons, excluding active opposition.

A parable: e.g. the slave trade. You could be an out-and-out abolitionist, and/or you could work for the amelioration of the conditions of slaves, and of the markets, etc. These two activities could appear "activated by similar motives of humanitarian concern". But out-and-out abolitionists could well argue that to ameliorate slavery is to accept basically the institution of slavery, to condition people to

the idea of slavery, of an acceptable condition of slavery, to a possibly acceptable slavery. So these two attempts to cope with slavery can be seen as alternatives, as irreconcilably opposed. The lesser can be seen as the enemy of the greater cause: it diverts energy from the main purpose, it conditions people to accept stopping short of the main end, and so to accept the main evil—and is the more devilish as using the humanitarian instincts of simple, un-subtle people in a way which basically shores up the evil, and contradicts their simple fundamental humanitarian intent . . . to do away with the evil.

All these criticisms can be brought against CD:—also that it diverts people's minds from the essential concern to a side-issue, and so "neutralises" them without their realising it. It even makes them work for, by preparing for, what they originally and basically were concerned to avert and prevent. CD's method of coping is to posit the hypothesis that what they want to avert has happened. This is at best illogical, at worst futile, deceived, and a deception. It is to substitute for opposition and prevention, acquiescence and acceptance. Civil Defence is thus a psychological weapon in the Cold War.

The more we have to think of nuclear weapons and their effects, the details and scale of them in daily practical ways, the more do we unavoidably, willy-nilly, scale them down within the limitations of our minds' dimensions—just as we cannot take in the astronomical dimensions of the universe, even the dimensions of the world, or of a continent, or of large populations—or of national expenditure figures. So to deal with the effects of nuclear weapons, in CD or in weapons research and production, we have to falsify them in our imagination, even subconsciously, to be able to think about them at all. In fact we think in reduced terms, which amount to symbols, shorthand substitutes for the ungraspable reality. (A trivial note, but neither unreal nor inapposite: to be "interested" in CD, as *e.g.* in gardening, as a hobby, a past-time or pursuit, is so inappropriate as to be absurd—and ghoulish). Parable: the first-aid, practicing with red ink or greasepaint, comes to real blood, real accident or death, and faints: "I never realised what the reality was, in all my theory and practice and expertise".

This is a simple unavoidable mental mechanism of reduction of scale, creating an illusion in place of the reality. Thus does CD serve the interests of those who wish to acclimatise ordinary people, despite their direct responses, to nuclear weapons.

Then there is the defence mechanism by which those who come nearest to knowing the realities, have to hide the realities away at the back of their minds, to suppress them, if they are to go on thinking about them. So the convinced advocates of nuclear weapons, the research workers, the technicians, politicians, and the military enable themselves to work with and deal with these things by deceiving themselves, by creating an illusion of the weapons and their effects on a reduced scale in place of the realities. If they did not do this, if this did not happen, they could not deal with these things; they would go mad. (See Robert Graves' poem *The Cool Web*).

CD also bolsters cold-war prejudices and irrationalities—by assuming without examination the presupposition that there is a danger of Russian bombs or rockets being sent against us. This is taken for granted without question. Thus CD propagates a begging of the whole political question: "because we are spending all this time and effort in CD, it follows that there must be a threat, against which all this is a preparation," . . . a classic example of mind-conditioning, propaganda, mass brain-washing. In fact, the West invented nuclear weapons, were the first to produce them, are the only nations ever to have used them in reality. Yet by subtle psychological and propaganda conditioning, illusions and auto-suggestion, we contrive to persuade ourselves that the Russians are the nuclear danger and devils! Now try to tell me that all this talk of psychological conditioning and propaganda has no validity.

Returning to the slave trade analogy—much of this applies with more force to nuclear weapons. For slavery was a time-honoured institution, to which mankind, or "civilised society" was conditioned by the greatest of all conditioners . . . time. But nuclear weapons are a brand-new, newly-hatched evil, to which tradition and instinct prompt a natural first response of revulsion, rejection. The more time passes in which these weapons are still accepted, developed, experimented with, made, kept, tested (and the accumulating and far-ramifying effects of tests accepted), the more do we all become gradually acclimatised, conditioned to accept them as a fact of existence, as a *fait accompli*, and later, as justifiable. So our values are unavoidably corrupted. We breathe slightly fouler air and cease to notice it; it becomes no longer new, but standard, we no longer notice the strange smell. It is fresh air that smells strange now. Time honours the new evil (as well as knighting or honouring its inventors, its perpetrators). A new evil becomes first "necessary", then no longer evil. So it is all the more important to oppose every institution which conditions us into acceptance of nuclear weapons, *e.g.* CD.

I will grant you this: that what I have said about being unable to take in the reality of nuclear weapons applies to all who think about them much. It applies equally to the nuclear disarmers. They too are liable to mental distortion. The only way of preserving sanity, without dealing in falsehood and illusions is to think only rarely about nuclear weapons, if at all. But this plays into the hands of the (slightly but really mad) boffins, politicians, strategists, eggheads, who are more dangerously mad than CNDers, inasmuch as the nuclear weapons researchers and creators are developing the weapons in a practical way, as if they were sane. The CNDers are hysterical, "deliberately" made so by their deliberate attempt always to see nuclear weapons in their real monstrous dimensions—and human minds simply cannot do this all the time; they crack in the attempt just as a voice cracks if it tries too long to keep up its loudest and highest pitch. There is an unavoidable falsification of tone, of manner, a strain, a concern with effect on others, more than exclusively with truth. This

is a terrible thing because these CNDers thus serve to put off and alienate the sane, ordinary people who value sanity highly, to deter them from doing anything about real dangers and evils, and about the really mad boffins, politicians and nuclear eggheads, who are betraying what civilisation means to us.

CD is of course in an impossible dilemma. Its work, if it could function at all under nuclear attack, could at best be only marginal. (Granted that any preservation of life and health, however little, may be seen as good, provided it is not being preserved to suffer intolerable long-term evils, from contamination and disease, and lowering of quality of genetic stocks by increased mutation rates, than which instant annihilation might well be judged better).

If we are to prepare ourselves to do more than marginal rescue work under a nuclear attack, then we must bleed ourselves white economically now, in "peace time", for an essentially unproductive end . . . deep shelters, vast stocks of buried food, etc., underground air-conditioning, water-conditioning, etc.—a monstrous neurosis here and now, all the time, in "peace-time", like the familiar personal neuroses (e.g. compulsive hand-washing) under which the victim drains away most of his life, time and energy to ward off some hypothetical evil (of his own creation), in face of which sanity resides in freeing the self from the fear, from obsessive subjection to the hypothesis, and from the compulsive "remedy". Better to devote our means to the necessities of life for millions on the earth now, and to cultivation of civilisation, of the arts and graces of existence, to real life, personal and private and social, than to starve ourselves to build vast sterile stores against Armageddon.

* * *

A note on the lack of response to CD. This is of course not due to CND opposition. It is because CD dwells on what none of us want to dwell on. It is basically defeatist; a doctrine of despair: the absurd under-belly of nuclear policy, betraying the absurdity of that policy itself. CD can only start to operate in earnest, all its preparations can only come fully into action and be "justified" and "fulfilled" when the bomb has dropped—when (as we all believe) all will be over . . . all interesting life . . . all life in which we can have any interest now. CD is dedicated to trying to persuade us all of something of which we will not be persuaded: that there is life for us after the bomb has dropped. It is an absurd contradiction of the basic optimism that is the essential basis of living. If we really believed all this was so likely to happen that we should prepare for it, we would all give up in despair. Of course we might then do something really effective, to put an end to the danger for good and all, taking things into our own private, sane and effective hands at long last. But we remain unpersuaded by CD and CND alike . . . and do nothing. For interestingly enough CD and CND are both attempting very similar things, to waken people to the same vast danger, both with equal lack of success. However, CD's failure serves the propaganda end of inducing

people to acquiesce in whatever the governments choose to do. Can they have been subtle enough to have calculated on this failure of CD, and on its effect of evoking a response of nothing much more than helpless lethargic acquiescence? I am not sure that CND does not in effect serve the same end . . . Perhaps the politicians are behind CND too! For the same end of mass-conditioning: not of those *in* CND but of the vast majority which will always be outside it, reacting away from it.

Thus to sum up and draw the threads together: CD and CND have in common an attempt to waken people to the danger of nuclear war: each being a propaganda and proselytising campaign, in the English puritan tradition, preaching the danger of hell-fire to come, and salvation by works. Opponents of CD might claim that the most subtle use of CD is to weaken CND and opposition to nuclear weapons by capturing those who are temperamentally potential converts of this kind of puritanical movement, preaching the dangers of nuclear war and salvation from it. CD may be seen as a rival attempt to corner this market, or at least to divide the market and split a monopoly. For, from their basic similarities in propaganda, CD and CND part company. CND offers hope of prevention (of the hell-fire) by determined revolutionary action by the people, the governed, to determine the policies of the governments. CD concentrates only on preparing for the flames of hell-fire itself, so that its appeal is inevitably less attractive than CND's, resting essentially as it does, on a pessimistic assumption.

It is unlikely that many people would combine the two: CD being an insurance (at present a half-hearted one) against failure to prevent hell-fire, implying the unlikelihood of success at prevention; while it is essential to CND's activity that it preaches and hopes for successful prevention. CD and government policy of reliance on nuclear weapons go together because both are policies of accommodation to nuclear weapons and nuclear war. Each would say "nuclear weapons have been invented, cannot be uninvented, exist: we must come to terms with them, learn to live with them." CND rejects nuclear weapons and nuclear war absolutely. CD and government policy resemble those who worked to ameliorate slavery: CND resembles the out-and-out abolitionists. CND asks: Has man no will? Must every evil that enters his head be worked on, experimented with, developed, worked out, refined, brought to a full flowering of fully realised evil? Are we powerless, fatalistic determinists?

CNDers generally accuse CD of underestimating the ill-effects of nuclear attack, or of deliberately propagating under-estimates. This is because CD tends to talk in terms of small attacks, by one, two or three bombs only—the only attacks in which there is any chance of CD having any effect at all. CND on the other hand assumes in its propaganda that any nuclear attack will be a large one—because this makes more shocking propaganda. This has no logical basis however; it is simply an assumption which CNDers believe, not necessarily correctly, makes their propaganda more effective.

Such are the deep-rooted differences between CD and CND.



Bunuel: forgetting the message

DONALD NICHOLSON-SMITH

"*Viridiana* follows my personal tradition since *L'Age d'Or*, and with a thirty-year interval these are the two films I have directed most freely."

OVER THE COCKTAILS AND COFFEE CUPS, *Viridiana* has already replaced Marienbad; the political and philosophical partisans are eagerly buzzing round the film, dissecting, extracting, adapting or inventing Buñuel's supposed message to support their particular theories. A little honesty and a modicum of attention to what the director has said himself about his beliefs and his films may help to dispel the fog of inaccuracy. I think they also confirm Buñuel as a profound spiritual anarchist and thus contradict Rufus Segar's pessimism as to the director's alignment in *ANARCHY 6*. But I don't want to fall into the same trap as the partisans, so let him speak for himself:

I appropriate the words of Emers: "The novelist has faithfully achieved his object when, by means of a precise depiction of authentic social relations, he destroys the conventional representation of the nature of these relations, shatters the optimism of the bourgeois world and forces the reader to doubt the permanence of the existing order, even if he doesn't directly propose a solution, even if he doesn't overtly commit himself."

And Buñuel certainly does not commit himself: apropos of *Viridiana* he reiterated that "I have not tried to prove anything . . . I do not use the cinema as a pulpit." His object is to reflect total reality, which includes the surreal experience of our lives—an extension separating him irrevocably from the neo-realists. It is because of this attitude and a constant refusal to betray it ("I have never yet sold myself . . . since *L'Age d'Or* my moral direction has never changed . . . I say, always and only, the things I feel deeply") that his work expresses a very personal and very consistent commentary on this *âge de boue*.

It is no coincidence that two quotations above seem to look upon *L'Age d'Or* and not *Un Chien Andalou* as Buñuel's debut. In his first film, described as "a desperate and passionate call to murder."

Dali and I chose the gags, the objects which came to mind, and ruthlessly suppressed anything which could have meaning. This taste for the irrational has stayed with me.

L'Age d'Or, on the other hand, represented a direct break with

Surrealism, the nihilistic element ceding to an explicit iconoclastic onslaught on conformity, which at once alienated Dali as being an attack on Catholicism "*de façon primaire et sans aucune poésie*." It is the first Buñuel, in point of fact. I want to glance at this and his other freely directed film—*Viridiana*—to illustrate the consistence he claims in his world view. The abstract horror and calculated obscenity of *Chien* had actually been appropriated and made fashionable (shades of *Fringe*) by polite bourgeois society. This has infuriated Buñuel, but he got his revenge with *L'Age d'Or*:

The producer of the film, the vicomte de Noailles, so proud to have a film of his very own (though completely unaware of the subject, for Buñuel had always refused him details), invited *le tout-Paris* to the première. At the entrance a valet announced the guests and the Noailles acknowledged smiles, salaams, advance congratulations. It was a different story after the screening, which was greeted with a glacial silence. Everybody made for the door, heads lowered, and the Noailles tried to hide their embarrassment. As for Buñuel, he had never been so pleased.

The film is a parable about two lovers who, in attempting to assert the reality of their passion, reject every manifestation of social authority from the law to the bourgeois conventions, from religious morality to the demands of patriotism. Buñuel has said:

Bourgeois morality is for me the anti-morality against which we must struggle. The morality founded on our extremely unjust social institutions like religion, fatherland, family, culture: in short what are called the pillars of society. There is no alternative to rebellion in so badly made a world.

and this exactly summarises the principal theme of *L'Age d'Or*. But the film goes further: the couple, even when they find solitude in the garden, are hampered as much now by interior obstacles as they were previously by exterior forces. Society has its hooks irretrievably in their subconscious, and atavistic inhibitions—represented by their reluctance to get off their awkward chairs and copulate in comfort on the ground, and then by their clothes—cripple their expression: frustrated in their attempt to destroy hypocrisy and affirm their individuality, the girl sucks a statue's toe and her partner, after the famous sequence in which he defenestrates the symbols of his religious and cultural heritage, retires into masturbatory solitude. Of course this is not the only theme of the film, but it is unquestionably the main one, and these are certainly the ideas we recognise in the latest of his films to be released here.

It is as pointless to look for a message in Buñuel as it is to ignore his artistic anarchy (in the popular sense), that constant "taste for the irrational"!

(In "*Viridiana*") I wanted basically to make a *film d'humour*—corrosive, granted, but spontaneous—and in which I express erotic and religious childhood obsessions. For me religious education and surrealism have left a lifelong mark.

All the same *Viridiana* reveals exactly the same view of the individual in society as *L'Age d'Or*. And it is an anarchist view: look at the principal characters, who present an expanded spectrum of individuals variously conditioned by the pillars of society against personal liberty. There is don Jaime, who commits suicide because his repressed love for his wife, dead on the wedding night, becomes a

neurosis (he tries on his wife's clothes before a mirror) which abortively identifies his niece with the dead woman: he is the slave of society's rules about sex which prevent him from taking advantage of the novice when he has the opportunity, and about class, which keep from his mind the obvious release from his obsession offered by the maidservant Ramona, herself sex-starved and ready to sleep with him; the root of his trouble moreover, is the Christian fetishism surrounding marriage. There is Jorge, the illegitimate son recognised by don Jaime in his will, a man of the world who compromises consciously with morality and creates a falsely secure world: he lives practically, considers Viridiana's efforts to aid a few beggars as pointless in the face of the world's poverty, and buys a maltreated dog with complacent kindness without noticing another, even worse treated, which goes past when he turns round; bourgeois hypocrisy and self-deception blinker him to the possibility of change and withdraws his individuality. There is Viridiana, whose fanatical asceticism and Christian certainty are put in question when she feels a certain responsibility for her uncle's suicide. In her groping efforts to expunge this by Christ-like action, she fails to throw off the absolutism of her conditioning and idealises the down-and-outs instead of facing the fact that society has already killed them as human beings. If Jorge is blinded by convention, she is blinded by the lying mythology of the church, and her final disillusioned subjection to her cousin's morality of compromise represents not so much a decline as a change of masters. Buñuel's pessimism sees society as the only—albeit protean—evil in men's lives, because it always cripples their liberty to see the truth and act upon it.

There is another character of interest in *Viridiana*, though: a little girl, daughter of the maid, shows perhaps, the director's idea of freedom. Rather like the negro in *The Young One*, Rita is (as yet) free of all the dominations of society: she skips in defiance of her father under the tree where don Jaime hanged himself, believes what her imagination tells her, and ignores class tabus by playing with Viridiana. On a less conscious plane, she is like the beggar who has enough pride to refuse the patronising and shackling aid of Viridiana and enough liberty to demand alms as he walks off. Two little anarchists, you might say.

"I am free and I want others to be free", Buñuel once said, and he knows that the only way to free people is to change society or abolish it. He will continue to make films "without a message" while pointing an unwavering finger at the root of our sufferings and obeying his own categorical "*Je mets dans mes films ce que j'ai envie d'y mettre.*" For only Chaplin among film makers has seen so clearly and condemned so frankly as Luis Buñuel, and none has stated so openly his lack of illusions towards his work: "The world being what it is today I don't make my films for the public—I mean the 'public' in inverted commas. If the public is conventional, traditional and perverted, that is not my fault but society's."

NOTE—Some of the quotations in this article have been translated from Luis Buñuel by Ado Kyrrou (Paris: Seghers, 1962).

'ANARCHIST CINEMA' at the NATIONAL FILM THEATRE

ANARCHY 6, ON "ANARCHY AND CINEMA", (in which, besides the contributions of experimental film-makers there were articles on the work of Jean Vigo, Luis Buñuel and Robert Flaherty), turned out to be a harbinger of the current season of Anarchist Cinema at the National Film Theatre. Organised by Alan Lovell, the film critic of *Peace News*, it brings a rare opportunity to cinema enthusiasts—in the London area at least—which film societies in other areas might emulate. The season opened with "The Anarchist Attack", a programme consisting of Vigo's *A Propos de Nice*, Buñuel's *L'Age d'Or*, and Franju's *Le Sang de Bêtes*, and it has continued with performances of Vigo's *L'Atalante* and *Zéro de Conduite*, Buñuel's *Land Without Bread*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Abismos de Pasion*, *The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de la Cruz* and *Nazarin*, and Franju's *The Keepers*, *Hôtel des Invalides*, and *Eyes Without a Face*. The "Anarchist Humour" programme on June 29th included films of Spike Milligan and the Goons, as well as the Polish *Two Men and a Wardrobe*. "Anarchism Today" on July 10th will consist of short films from Poland, Czechoslovakia and America, and the season will end on July 14th—Bastille Day—with two programmes on "British Anarchism". The afternoon session at 3.00 will consist of *Thursday's Children*, *The Vision of William Blake*, *Via Crucis* and *Four People*. The evening session at 7.00 will consist of a film-illustrated talk by Alan Lovell as well as a discussion by British artists about their own work, and in what way it could be called anarchist.

The season looks to me like an augury. It is rash to make this sort of prophesy, but I would think that the really creative ideas in our cinema for the next few years are more likely to come from directors who respond to Buñuel and Vigo and Truffaut and the Goons than from the people who are still fighting the battle for what is wearily called social realism. When the label is hung like a service medal on the breast of any timid and unimaginative film we produce, it means less and less; and it has always been handed out to the wrong people—Shelagh Delaney, for instance, is a deeply poetic writer, and Alan Sillitoe is a born anarchist.

—PENELOPE GILLIATT: "Saved by the Anarchists",
The Observer 3/6/62.
